

GI SPECIAL 2#B37

TEST QUESTIONS:



US soldiers in Najaf. (AFP/Karim Sahib)

If it were announced that all U.S. troops could immediately and unconditionally leave Iraq:

A.) How many could get into this vehicle?

B.) How soon could this vehicle cross the nearest border out of Iraq?

C.) Would it be necessary for troops to wait for command headquarters to draft, discuss, revise, review, submit for approval up the chain of command, and do power point presentations about how to withdraw from Iraq, or could the troops organize it faster, using their own initiative on how to get the fuck to the nearest border the most quickly?

D.) And now, for rank, the key question:

Troops were told they would be welcomed by Iraqi people throwing flowers. Instead, there are infinite numbers of Iraqi people trying to kill them because they don't want George Bush running their country as his own personal dictatorship.

If a public announcement were made all over Iraq that all occupying troops are leaving forthwith, which of the following is more likely?

1. The resistance will spare no effort to obstruct the withdrawal by opening fire at every opportunity, slowing down the withdrawal as much as possible, OR
2. The resistance will do everything humanly possible to facilitate the withdrawal, including providing gasoline, water, food, traffic control assistance and, yes, people throwing flowers as the occupation army leaves the country. The resistance will chop the head off anybody who interferes with the withdrawal in any way whatsoever. And nobody will be trying to kill you any more.

If you get the answers right, you remain at your present rank.

If you get the answers wrong, you will received an immediate promotion and detachment to the personal staff of the Secretary of Defense, the President of the United States, Senator John Kerry, or some other traitor in Washington DC who is for keeping this war for Empire going. T

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. **Send requests to address up top. For copies on web site see: <http://www.militaryproject.org/> or <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed, Three Wounded In Samarra Ambush

BAGHDAD, Aug 20 (AFP)

Two US soldiers were killed and another three wounded Friday when their patrol was attacked near Samarra, north of Baghdad, a US military spokesman said.

"The US patrol was attacked by an improvised explosive device at around 5:55 pm (13:55 GMT) near Samarra killing one soldier instantly, while the other succumbed to wounds later," the spokesman said.

"The conditions of the other three wounded is stable."

Overton County Marine Reservist Dead

8.20.04 COOKEVILLE, Tenn. (AP)



A Marine reservist from Overton County was killed in Iraq, his family said.

The military told the family of Cpl. Brad Preston McCormick, 23, that he died Wednesday in an explosion in Najaf. McCormick was married, but had no children.

McCormick is the son of Cookeville Herald-Citizen circulation manager Keith McCormick.

Brad McCormick graduated from Livingston Academy in 2000 and Tennessee Tech University in 2003 with a degree in wildlife biology. He married Courtney Curtis in December just before his Marine Reserve unit was deployed for active duty.

His family said McCormick last called home about three weeks ago, telling his father that he and other Marines were about to be moved to another location in the war zone.

Another Connecticut Soldier Killed

8.20.04 WASHINGTON (AP)

Specialist Jacob Martir, 21, of Norwich, died Wednesday in Sadr City, the Defense Department said Friday. Martir's patrol came under enemy small arms fire, the military said.

Martir was assigned to the Second Battalion, Fifth Cavalry Regiment of the First Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas.

Martir was a native of Cagus, Puerto Rico, who listed Norwich, Conn., as his home of record, according to Fort Hood officials.

Martir is the 14th member of the military from Connecticut to die in Iraq or Afghanistan since March, 2003.

Marine Dies Of Wounds

August 20, 2004 The Associated Press

A Marine assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force died of wounds received in action Wednesday.

Poverty Draft Claims Another; Soldier From Colorado Killed

8/20/2004 DENVER (AP)

A soldier who was killed in Iraq had joined the Army nearly two years ago to earn money for college and wanted to become a firefighter.

Pfc. Henry C. Risner, 26, died Wednesday near Baghdad when his checkpoint came under enemy small arms fire, military officials said.

"He's one of these boys who, when anybody needed help, he was right there. He was just extremely protective of other people who were in trouble," Risner said.

Henry Risner was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y.

His wife, who was expected to travel from Fort Drum to Golden to discuss memorial plans, was expecting a baby in January or February, Gerald Risner said.

Henry Risner decided to join the Army after taking several years to graduate from high school, his father said.

"I said, 'Good idea,' because I couldn't put him through college," said the elder Risner, a retired Marine.



Risner said his son would help him make and sell cinnamon-roasted almonds at various events.

"I'd tell people there were no calories, and he came up with an anecdote. He'd say we cooked everything in water, and then he'd say 'Did you realize calories can't swim at this altitude?' I use that all the time," Gerald Risner said.

Henry Risner enjoyed hunting, fishing and sports and rooted for the Denver Broncos. He also is survived by his mother.

Despite Superior Firepower, Occupation Losing Ground To Al-Sadr's Militia

August 19, 2004 Knight-Ridder

During the past two weeks of fighting in Najaf, the dusty city proved to be a glaring example of the limits of American military might in post-sovereignty Iraq.

In Fallujah earlier this year, the need to balance force with politics has stripped away many of their advantages.

The two military forces are starkly different.

Fighters loyal to al-Sadr, called the Mahdi Army, run the streets of Najaf in a chaotic circus of men in flip-flops and sandals who pump their old AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenade launchers in the air, call for death to America and generally shoot at anything moving.

U.S. forces are better equipped, in uniforms, boots and body armor, and they ride in armored vehicles topped with machine guns and cannons.

But while the Mahdi Army can move and shoot pretty much at will, U.S. commanders are forced into deliberate, careful maneuvers, waiting for political discussions in Washington and Baghdad to bear fruit.

U.S. forces no longer have the advantage of overwhelming air power. After cordoning off the city center's Imam Ali Shrine and surrounding areas, the Marines had to dismount and pick their way through a nearby cemetery, fighting close-quarter battles among the mausoleums and headstones with Mahdi gunmen who invited death as a passage to paradise.

Al-Sadr was able to bring in thousands of supporters, primarily from the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, who vowed to be human shields. With 3 million people in Sadr City, if only 5 percent of the population were to support him, he'd have 150,000 people behind him, more than the number of U.S. troops in Iraq.

With every photograph and television shot of a Mahdi fighter daring to fight the U.S. military, al-Sadr's support seemed to grow amongst Iraq's majority Shiite population, once counted on to be the backbone of post-war U.S. policy in Iraq.

Instead of being able to unload the massive air superiority at their fingertips - continuous Apache helicopter strikes and F-15 fighter jet bombing runs that could have wiped out the militia in a day - they had to pick and choose, start and stop.

In the pauses between, al-Sadr played a game of military inches. Despite the overwhelming U.S. firepower on the ground in Najaf, he looks to have gained ground.

NO JOY HERE. BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW.



American soldiers, Najaf, Aug. 20, 2004. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

Ferocious Attack On Najaf Accomplishes Nothing Much; Madhi Warriors Defy Occupation

20 August 2004 Reuters

U.S. warplanes struck with such ferocity against radical Shi'ite militia in Najaf overnight that even the homing pigeons did not return afterwards to Iraq's holy city.

"I had 50 pigeons on the roof. It took me so long to train them. It is a family tradition started by my grandfather," said Mahmoud Ali, 17. "There was so much pounding that they flew away. They are all gone."

If the intention of the onslaught was to break the will of Mehdi Army fighters, it had the opposite effect on a middle-aged fighter who had just come back from the front to search for his children.

"Yes I am from the Mehdi Army. I will fight. I will fight. I will kill," said Abu Seif Kathim, 42, a father of six.

His anger grew as he inspected about 30 large bullet holes on the outer wall of his brick home. Neighbors said his family fled before a U.S. soldier with a machinegun mounted on a tank opened fire and rattled the neighborhood with rapid fire bullets.

"You see this? These are my combat clothes. I have been fighting all night and I will go back. Even if they kill all my children I will fight all night," he added, unrolling an old flowing robe.

Najaf: Now U.S. Stooge Allawi Says No Attack On Shrine; Interior Minister Caught In Really Stupid Lies

Najaf, Iraq, Aug. 20 (UPI) & Scotsman.com & By: Michael Georgy (Reuters) & (CNN) & Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Ltd & 21aug04 From Sammy Ketz in Najaf, Iraq (AFP)

UNITED States tanks today encircled the sacred Imam Ali shrine in the Iraqi city of Najaf, after an intense bombardment of rebel positions overnight.

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said he would not send Iraqi troops into the shrine nor allow U.S. fighters to do so.

"We are not going to attack the mosque, we are not going to attack Moqtad al-Sadr in the mosque," Allawi told BBC World Service radio

Any raid to oust militants from the shrine - especially one that damaged the holy site - could spark a far larger Shia uprising.

Hours earlier, Sadr had refused in a letter to disarm but urged his fighters to hand over the Imam Ali shrine at the heart of the city to Iraq's highest Shiite authority, the Marjayia.

Sadr's letter was addressed to "my dear brothers inside the shrine of imam Ali" and signed by the cleric, but no immediate confirmation of its authenticity was possible.

"Everyone knows this Army is the foundation of the Imam Mehdi and I don't have the right to dissolve it," said the text, referring to the 12th Shiite Imam.

Earlier Friday, Iraqi Interior Ministry spokesman Sabah Kadhim said Iraqi police seized control of the mosque. But later, Iraqi police said they had not.

Iraqi government officials had insisted against all evidence on the ground that police had entered the mosque compound and detained several hundred militiamen.

An AFP correspondent in the shrine said he had not seen a single policeman.

On the contrary, he said fighting continued sporadically on the south side of the Old City between the militiamen and US-backed forces that had surrounded the shrine compound.

In Washington, a US defence official also strongly rejected the claims of Iraqi spokesmen.

"Not a lick of truth to it," he said. "We are still outside of the shrine, and so are the Iraqi police."

It was unclear why government officials in Baghdad had so wildly overstated the situation on the ground.

**WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



An American soldier patrols a deserted street in Najaf Aug. 20. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

MORE:

Iraqi Puppet Troops Picked To Attack Shrine Might Fight (Or Maybe Not)

8.20.04 By Karl Vick, Washington Post

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq -- **As the U.S. military edged closer to the shrine of Imam Ali and the rebellious Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada Sadr vowed "martyrdom or victory," the Iraqi forces that are expected to decide the matter trained in the desert wastes outside Najaf.**

As a dazzling orange sunset faded to black, several of them paused in the cool of the evening to talk about whether they could carry out the mission for which they were being trained, if it involved assaulting the holiest site in the country.

"I don't have an answer for you right now," said Mohammad Hassan, 30, a Shiite rifleman from Amarah.

"This is my problem," said Tofik Kasim, 23, whose home is near Basra. "I can fight anybody anywhere, but because this is a holy place, this is my problem.

"I have never been in Imam Ali's shrine. This would be the first time. And I go in fighting?"

"Training-wise, we're ready," said Lt. Col. Yarab Hashimi, who was a pilot in the Iraqi armed forces until he escaped the country in 1993. Hashimi said he regards the designation of shrines as a tradition imported from India, and not essential to Shiite belief. **Of the Imam Ali shrine, he said, "It is not a holy place."**

That appears to be a distinctly minority view, even among his 500 men.

"It's really difficult, man. Imam Ali is not just any person," said Hassan Gafil, a native of Diwaniyah who works as an interpreter for the battalion.

"The problem is the war will happen inside the mosque. This is the problem. If the war would happen outside or in the street, the Sadr forces would be destroyed by the Iraqis. But because they hid inside the mosque, it's too difficult."

Today, about half the battalion is Kurdish, a disproportionate share, in part because **volunteers from the Shiite party chose to step down rather than fight Iraqis in Fallujah, according to one adviser. Others dropped out as the battle for Najaf loomed.**

Mental preparation is key, Hashimi said, comparing his elite unit to the battalions of Iraqi troops that have proved less reliable.

"The problem with the other units," he said, "is they don't have the conversations we have here. I can tell these guys anything. I can insist on doing something.

"How do you tell them what story to believe in if they just join for a job?"

MORE:

Why The Occupation Fears Sadr:

Steadfast in Defiance, Cleric Gains With Masses

18 August 2004 By Tyler Marshall and Henry Chu, Los Angeles Times

Several observers say Allawi and U.S. forces have no viable options other than trying for a negotiated end to the uprising because attempting to crush Sadr militarily would carry too high a political price.

"In all probability, it would take an unacceptable level of force in and around the shrine," noted Cliff Kupchan, a Middle East specialist at the Nixon Center in Washington.

"Whether Iraqi troops do this or Americans, it would be a generational setback for U.S. legitimacy in the Arab world."

Inherent in such assessments is the belief that, even though Sadr's forces chose to confront the U.S. militarily from one of the holiest sites in Shiite Islam, **the public would almost certainly hold the Americans and Allawi's U.S.-backed administration responsible for damage from any operation to crush him.**

Although many Iraqis denounce his tactics, Sadr's strident militancy has made him the embodiment of resistance to the continued presence of more than 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq.

"Is it better for Iraq and the political process and for democracy to embrace these people or suppress these people?" said political analyst Khudeir Dulaimi in Baghdad.

"It is better to engage the country [including] his followers, who are very great in number. **If we suppress them, they will emerge again.**"

Analysts believe that a key to Sadr's political clout has been his emergence as the only national symbol of defiance to the massive U.S. military presence that remains in Iraq despite the formal hand-over of sovereignty. As the U.S. presence grows more unpopular, Sadr's aura gains more luster.

"He's filled a vacuum of the need to express opposition to the occupation and the current government," noted Shibley Telhami, a Middle East specialist at the University of Maryland. **"The insurgents are faceless or disorganized. Sadr's face has become a symbol for opposition."**

In his public statements, Sadr has made opposition to the American presence tantamount to a patriotic duty.

"Everyone can learn from him on how he has used the media to communicate his message," noted Bruce Hoffman, acting director of the Rand Corp. Center for Middle East Public Policy in Washington. **"He came out of nowhere into a vacuum to become the most recognized populist political figure in Iraq."**

His growing appeal to people like Alaa Mohammed has greatly complicated government efforts to resolve the Najaf crisis. The 29-year-old journalist is educated, articulate, politically engaged, and a follower of Sadr.

"Muqtada is our chief," Mohammed declared with no flicker of doubt. "He's the one we want. **He was the only religious authority who faced the occupying forces.**"

Although the uprising by Sadr's militia ended in an inconclusive truce - and the current fighting, too, has produced no measurable military gains - **it is the very act of fighting that seems to add to Sadr's stature.**

"He's a populist, a grass-roots political figure," Hoffman said.

"He's not polished, not terribly intellectual and doesn't have an accent leavened by decades in exile, but these have become his strengths. At a very visceral level, he appeals to many Iraqis." (For more see [The revolt against Bush's occupation](http://www.socialistworker.org/Storylist.shtml) at <http://www.socialistworker.org/Storylist.shtml>)

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
(THE OWNERS MAY COME BACK HOME WITH A FEW
HUNDRED FRIENDS)**



An American soldier looks on to the deserted street as pictures of Imam Hussein, left, and Imam Ali, right, adorn the wall of an Iraqi home in Najaf Aug. 20. M (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

Columbia Resident Seriously Fucked Up By IED

08/19/2004 By: Barry Ford, Columbia Ledger

Columbia resident Mike Graybill is back on United States soil after being seriously injured last week during ambush in Iraq.

Graybill, who attended Columbia High School and played football for the Crimson Tide, was flown back to the states over the weekend to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C.

A member of the United States Army since July 2002, Graybill suffered injuries last Tuesday when the vehicle he and four others were operating was ambushed from the side of the road. "A bomb detonated on the vehicle Mike was in," said Jodi Johnson, Graybill's cousin.

The occupants of the vehicle were thrown onto the road. The others in the vehicle were knocked out. Johnson said a tank that was leading Graybill's vehicle back to camp saw the explosion. "The people in the Bradley circled back and came to their aid. They said Mike would have bled to death if they didn't come back," Johnson said.

Graybill, who phoned his cousins, Johnson and Jennifer Kilhefner and his grandparents, Shirley and Eugene Graybill, after the attack, suffered a major injury to his left arm, spleen, lungs and bruised ribs. There were also various pieces of shrapnel that damaged other parts of Graybill's body.

“A Rocket Hit The Carrier And Landed In His Lap”

August 20, 2004 Advocate staff report, The Advocate

NEWARK -- Sue Vogelmeier plans to tie yellow ribbons on trees up and down Hudson Avenue if her son comes home soon from Iraq.

Her son, U.S. Army Sgt. Matt Hartman, 22, was injured Aug. 13 while driving an armored personnel carrier in Baghdad, Vogelmeier said.

A rocket hit the carrier and landed in his lap, she said. He suffered a broken right foot and shrapnel wounds in his arms and legs. The carrier burned to the ground.

"He's still in Baghdad. We're waiting word to see if he's going to come home," she said. "We don't know yet."

Hartman, originally from Circleville graduated from Hoover High School in North Canton. He joined the Army in April 2001, Vogelmeier said. He is currently stationed in Abu Ghraib with the 1st-5th Cavalry.

Hartman plans to come to Newark after completing his service, according to his mother, who is just happy her son is alive and that his injuries were relatively minor.

His mother and stepfather, Neil Vogelmeier, a lineman for AEP, live on Hudson Avenue.

TROOP NEWS

Thai Government Lies; Thai Troops Do Withdraw From Iraq Early

BANGKOK, Aug. 20 (Xinhuanet)

All Thai troops in Iraq will on next Friday pull out of the country and head to Kuwait, the spokesman for Thai Defense Ministry said here on Friday afternoon.

Having withdrawn from the Lima Camp in Karbala, the Thai troops of some 420 soldiers will stay at the Virginia Camp in Kuwait, the spokesman Palangoon Glaharn told reporters.

The troops will stay in Kuwait until the United States military transport them back to Thailand on September 20, when their 6-month mission officially ends, said Palangoon.

Despite of domestic opposition and deteriorating security situation in Iraq, the Thai government insisted all Thai troops would pull out of Iraq in September as planned.

Palangoon denied the plan to pulling out of Iraq in next week was an earlier withdrawal, saying that "they have completed their mission there as planned."

Pentagon Uses Med Review Boards To Cheat Disabled Soldiers; Bush Buddies Have Other Priorities

August 23, 2004 By Karen Jowers, Army Times staff writer

Staff Sgt. Dwayne Fitzpatrick has nothing but praise for the doctor who treated him at Fort Stewart, Ga., in the first steps of the Army's process to determine if he was fit to continue on duty.

He has a different opinion about the bureaucracy.

In May, a physical evaluation board notified Fitzpatrick, who has been diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a disorder that causes widespread muscle pain and fatigue, that it had decided to rate him 20 percent disabled. That is 10 percentage points shy of what is needed for medical retirement.

Officials in the patient affairs division of the hospital then offered him a lump sum of about \$23,000, Fitzpatrick said. **"That was what I was worth, and she came up with that figure pretty quickly,"** said Fitzpatrick, of Orlando, Fla., an 11-year Florida National Guard veteran who deployed to Saudi Arabia in 2002.

After he discovered errors in the packet that was submitted, including the fact that most of the doctor's documentation was removed, Fitzpatrick appealed. He presented the new information, including the doctor's original information, to the board at the beginning of June.

Fitzgerald won the appeal, receiving a disability rating of 40 percent, and was medically retired on July 15. He now receives \$1,234 a month.

"We don't care about the amount of money," Fitzpatrick said. "We just want our medical care. **I've met about 25 to 30 people, and only three of us have gotten 30 percent or more. The others are 10, 20, or zero percent. Six appealed their decisions and they were left unchanged.**"

Although the military does a good job taking care of those with serious injuries that are visible, such as loss of limbs, "they're doing a bad job compensating people for things you can't see," said Steve Robinson, executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center.

Robinson said anecdotal information indicates review boards are underevaluating service members' medical conditions by 10 to 20 percentage points.

If a soldier is determined to have at least a 30 percent disability, he is medically retired. But if the soldier does not have at least 20 years of service, anything less than a 30 percent rating can result only in a severance payment.

According to an Army information paper, disability severance pay is equal to two months' basic pay for each year of service, up to a maximum — at most, 24 months of basic pay.

"When they're medically retired or take severance, it goes against the Defense Department budget," Robinson said. "It looks as if DoD may be saving money by not correctly evaluating these soldiers, and that's going to hurt them down the road."

Along with underrating troops' conditions, Robinson contends the medical board process takes too long, leaving troops in limbo about their future. "It's unconscionable that you could survive Iraq and come back and wait 10 to 16 months" for resolution, he said.

GET SOME TRUTH: CHECK OUT **THE NEW TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

"I'm Done. I Did My Part" Injured Soldier Returns To Valley

8.19.04 By WILLIAM K. ALCORN, VINDICATOR STAFF WRITER

LORDSTOWN — "He looks good ... real good," a relieved Rachael Bowker said of her husband, Army Reserve Spec. Robert Bowker, who arrived home early Wednesday after being seriously injured July 26 in a suicide car bombing at a U.S. base near Mosul, Iraq.

Holding hands, the young couple sat on the front porch of the home of Rachael's mother, Sherry Kohn, in Warren and talked about his experience in Iraq and of seeing each other for the first time since he was wounded.

While he smiled a lot and is looking well, Robert, 22, is still taking pain medication for his injuries, and will need more surgery to repair his left ear and eardrum and may need skin grafts. He has shrapnel in his right eyebrow and the inside of his left elbow, which he said will eventually work its way out.

He also has a divot on the top of his left hand and wounds on both legs that require bandages.

"His cuts look nasty. I hate looking at them," Rachael said.

But for now, Robert said: "I'm just happy to be home ... happy to be alive. I got lucky. I survived."

The couple's immediate plans are to spend time with each other and visit friends and relatives during his 28-day leave. Rachael said she is planning a big welcome-home celebration sometime during his leave.

With the exception of a two-week leave in May, he has been gone since Oct. 19, 2003, just two days after he and Rachael were married.

Robert, a member of the 401st Transportation Co. in Battle Creek, Mich., volunteered to go to Iraq.

He said he is proud to serve his country, but does not plan to stay in the military once his enlistment is over.

"I'm done. I did my part," he said.

Robert said about half of the Iraqis seem to want Americans there, but others, especially the Muslims, want American troops out. (That's about 99%.)

But, when he was wounded, it was an Iraqi civilian who helped him to a safer area. "I couldn't walk, and the combat lifesaver [medic] was also wounded and needed help," he said.

Regarding the car bombing, Robert said he was looking north and the car came from the south.

"He swerved toward me and I reached for my M-16. He beat me to it, and pushed the button," he said. Three Iraqis — including a woman and child — were killed, and several U.S. soldiers were injured.

He said the experience has not caused him to be depressed, but he has had some problems sleeping and certain noises wake him up out of a dead sleep. Robert said he will be placed on medical hold status when he returns to Fort Lewis, Wash.

However, he's home now. If it still didn't sink in after being reunited with his wife, mother and sister at the airport, it definitely became real when he and the family joined together for breakfast at the home of Betty Sigley, his grandmother, in McDonald.

Robert and Rachael live in Lordstown. Robert grew up in Stow and Niles, and Rachael is originally from Warren.

Abu Ghraib Probe Points To Top Brass; But They'll Shit On The Grunts, As Usual

20 August 2004 By Josh White and Thomas E. Ricks, The Washington Post

An Army investigation into the role of military intelligence personnel in the abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison reports that the scandal **was not just caused by a small circle of rogue military police soldiers but resulted from failures of leadership rising to the highest levels of the U.S. command in Iraq, senior defense officials said.**

The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the report has not yet been completed, said the 9,000-page document says that a combination of leadership failings, confounding policies, lack of discipline and absolute confusion at the prison led to the abuse. **It widens the scope of culpability from seven MPs who have been charged with abuse to include nearly 20 low-ranking soldiers** who could face criminal prosecution in military courts.

No Army officers, however, are expected to face criminal charges.

MORE:

Witness To Abuse Trying To Be Heard; "It Seems They Want To Sacrifice Seven Soldiers"

20 August 2004 By Elizabeth Williamson, The Washington Post

Hagerstown, Md. - In his 33 years, Ken Davis has had two big chances to change history. The first was 10 years ago in the District, when a man standing next to him started shooting at the White House. The second was last year in Iraq, when he saw naked Iraqi prisoners on the floor, screaming.

Subduing the gunman was easy compared with what the former reservist for the 372nd Military Police Company is trying to do now: persuade the Army that it was military intelligence and other intelligence operatives, not the seven soldiers charged, directing the abuse in Abu Ghraib prison.

"It seems they want to sacrifice seven soldiers for the sins of everyone," he said. "Whoever led them down that path is a culprit as well."

Early this month, an Army prosecutor, Capt. Chris Graveline, called him. "Why haven't you looked for the people who taught our soldiers how to do this?" Davis said he asked him. He said Graveline told him he was new to the case.

In coming days, the results of an Army investigation examining the role of military intelligence in the prisoner abuse are due out. **Davis said he finds it strange that nobody has spoken with him for it.**

"I don't know if they want the truth," he said, "or if they just want it to go away."

MORE:

CIA Personnel, Civilians Cited In Abuse

[USA Today, August 20, 2004, Pg. 11]

The Army's latest investigation of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib will implicate more than two dozen U.S. military intelligence personnel and at least five civilian contractors. Some of those individuals will face allegations that **they contributed to the most serious cases of sexual abuse and sodomy yet made public.**

Family, Friends Mourn Orland Marine

Aug. 20, 2004 Associated Press

ORLAND, Calif. - Family and friends are mourning the death of a 27-year-old Marine who was killed in Iraq Wednesday. Sgt. Harvey Emmett Parkerson III, a 1996 graduate of Orland High, was shot and killed during fighting around the rebel stronghold in Najaf.

Remembered as an outstanding athlete with a good work ethic, Parkerson joined the military in 1999 and re-enlisted last year.

Camp Pendleton Hospital Trashed By War; Patients Can't Get Service

August 20, 2004 Associated Press

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Military dependents and retirees are having to wait longer for care at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton and its clinics since the war in Iraq has thinned the supply of doctors and nurses.

Clinics providing family care, internal medicine and pediatric services have lost nearly half their staffs to deployments in Iraq and normal duty rotations, said Doug Allen, a base hospital spokesman.

Nearly 30,000 dependents and retirees rely on the hospital and clinics for primary care.

In June, the demand for appointments was 15 percent greater than availability. **More patients have sought care at the base emergency room, increasing the non-emergency wait times from four or five hours to seven or eight.**

Medical officials have asked patients to postpone routine appointments and checkups for the next two months to allow staff to concentrate on more serious cases.

Huh?

August 23, 2004 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times staff writer

BAQUBAH, Iraq — Chaplain (Maj.) Chip Huey recently witnessed a fierce battle in an urban environment. He wore protective gear, but was completely unarmed and had no intention of shooting.

He just wanted to be there with the other soldiers.

There were no U.S. casualties, but there easily could have been. *That's part of the reason Huey says he likes to be there.*

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Cuts Northern Iraqi Pipeline

20 August 2004 (AFP) & Al Jazeera

KIRKUK, Iraq - A local pipeline linking the main northern Iraqi oilfields of Kirkuk to the Baiji refinery was damaged when a makeshift bomb exploded early on Friday, hampering oil distribution, said a security source.

The bomb detonated at 8:30 am (0230 GMT), 30 kilometres (19 miles) west of Kirkuk, said fire fighter Ali Abdullah attached to the state-run North Oil Company, giving no further details.

“We will not leave a single coalition base untouched and we will attack oil wells if attacks on Najaf continue,” Sheikh Ahmed Fartusi, who called himself the Basra commander of the Mehdi Army, told AFP on Thursday.

Security has been intense along the length of the northern export artery in a bid to prevent any new disruption to the vital foreign-exchange earner. **(So much for that.)**

OCCUPATION REPORT

Cowards In Command Continue Useless Killings Of Fallujah Civilians: Brilliant Attack On Ice Cream Factory

20 August 2004 Associated Press

A US bombing raid on the Iraqi town of Falluja has left five people dead and wounded six.

U.S. forces launched two airstrikes Friday on the troubled Iraqi city of Fallujah, hospital officials and witnesses said. The first came just after midnight and killed five people and injured six, said Dia'a al-Jumeili, a doctor at Fallujah's main hospital.

A second warplane fired at least one missile into an industrial area of the city later Friday morning. It exploded in an open field, leaving a crater and spraying shrapnel across the doors of nearby automobile shops, but causing no serious damage and no casualties.

Shrapnel from the second blast also hit an ice cream factory, wounding three people, said Adel Khamis, another doctor at Fallujah General Hospital.

Insurgents responded to the earlier attack by firing mortars toward a nearby U.S. base as calls of "God is Great" and Quranic verses, used to boost the morale of the fighters, blared from the loudspeakers of mosques.

US warplanes have bombed the mainly Sunni town almost daily over the past week.

Since the U.S. Marines pulled back from Fallujah after besieging the city for three weeks in April, the military has been limited to using long distance strikes against targets there.

(Without having the slightest effect on the fact that the Resistance controls the city completely. This is the act of a whipped command, that can't admit they have lost the battle, and the war, and so the cowards in charge just kill some civilians every day to make it look good.)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

70% Of Americans Say Iraq War Based On Bullshit

Aug. 20, 2004 Associated Press

Seven in 10 in the poll say they believe the United States went to war in Iraq based on false assumptions. A similar number say the war in Iraq has given the United States a worse image in the world.

A majority, 55 percent, say they don't think the war in Iraq will result in greater peace and stability in the Mideast.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

The Holy Church Of Anybody But Bush: “Fucking Stupid, Full Of Shit, Or Fucking Nuts?”

August 20, 2004 By Stephen Gowans <http://www3.sympatico.ca/sr.gowans/lost.html>

George Carlin once remarked that there a lot of dumb people in the world, and then there are people who don't, at first, seem dumb, but once you get to know them, turn out to be fucking stupid, full of shit, or fucking nuts. This, I can attest, is a truer statement than anything you can read in this, the run up to the US presidential election, by Tariq Ali, David Barsamian or Michael Moore.

Dan Quayle, said Carlin, was all three: fucking stupid, full of shit, and fucking nuts.

Which is what I've come to think of the socialists for Kerry, Marxists for Kerry, Communists for Kerry, progressives for Kerry, antiwar activists for Kerry and Michael Moore ditto-heads for Kerry, who've piled onto the Kerry for President bandwagon. To steal one of Carlin's other lines and adapt it to the moment, their reasoning for backing Kerry stinks so badly it could knock a buzzard off a shit-wagon. Indeed, the weakness of their arguments is surpassed only by their doggedness in crafting even more risibly weak ones whenever the last has been demolished.

Part of me says there's nothing to be gained by harping on upon the sheer idiocy of antiwar activists backing a candidate any genuine Left analysis would show to be, as strongly as Bush, an instrument of war on Iraq (and beyond) -- an analysis, by the way, that Kerry's advisors corroborated when they said their guy would in all probability have ordered the invasion of Iraq, even knowing what he knows today about weapons of mass destruction.

What's truly astonishing about all this is that the two major candidates can now openly declare they would have invaded Iraq without even the pretext of banned weapons to provide a moral cover for raw imperialism, and any expression of outrage, much less of a desire to build an action plan to do something about it, has been sublimated harmlessly into getting out the vote for a candidate who would have done the same as the candidate who's to be punished for doing what the favored candidate would have done anyway. It's like setting Charles Manson free to capture Jeffrey Dahmer.

Equally amazing, is that Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11, which smiles on the faux war on terrorism, thinks the US bombing of Afghanistan was all right, and is aimed at anti-Bush opponents of the Iraq war, is still vigorously defended in soft Left circles, though the purpose of the film is to bolster support for a presidential candidate who voted for war on Iraq and says he would in all probability have ordered US troops to march on Baghdad had he been president.

If that's not reason enough to wonder whether the fucking stupid, full of shit, and fucking nuts Quayle has plenty of company in the MoveOn organization, the US Communist Party, left discussion groups, and Michael Moore fan clubs, along comes the Democratic Socialists of America to publicly endorse Kerry, after Kerry says he would have invaded Iraq had he been ensconced in the White House.

It's enough to send one scurrying to the archives to dust off Phil Ochs' "Love Me, Love Me, Love Me, I'm A Liberal." Ochs once remarked in connection with his song that of all the various shades of political opinion in the United States, the shadiest of all is the liberal, to which he may have added the Democratic Socialist, 10 degrees to the left of center when it doesn't matter, and 10 degrees to the right when it does.

Which calls to mind Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn and Robert Jensen, luminaries of the soft Left, who are voting for Nader, not Kerry, because by an accident of geography, neither lives in a state where the vote is going to be close.

Kerry's going to take Massachusetts, where the first two live, and Bush is sure to take Texas, where Jensen lives, so all three can tilt 10 degrees to the left, without upsetting the Kerry apple cart. Meanwhile, they're making damn sure it's understood that anyone who lives in a swing state should give Nader (or any other alternative) a wide berth and hold their nose by voting for Kerry.

Lurching ataxically from this miasma of self-righteous hypocrisy are the people who play word games to deceive, claiming they're not backing Kerry -- they're just voting for him!

That's like saying you're not dealing drugs, you're just manufacturing them in your basement and distributing them to dealers.

Look, unless you're General Motors, Raytheon or pull in a cool million every year in salary, bonuses and stock options -- and can therefore afford to pitchfork money into the Kerry campaign -- what really matters to Kerry is your vote.

No amount of dissembling, self-delusion and rationalizing will make marking an X for Kerry not equal to backing him, or not equal, by extension, to backing the continued occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, looming confrontations with North Korea ("we will seek dismantlement, not a freeze"), Iran ("we are going to do more than simply allow Iran to continue down the path it's on"), plundering the oil producing regions of the world ("the degree to which we are dependent on foreign oil is a vulnerability we need to try to alter") and God knows what else, in the service of aggrandizing corporate America, its beneficiaries and representatives.

That hardly seems to be the kind of thing anyone who considers himself politically Left should be backing.

The other part of me says go ahead and vent. There's no need to be diplomatic, for diplomacy wasted on a lost cause is, itself, a lost cause. And as to the charge that I'm simply undermining the desirable goal of Left unity, it might be asked in what service this unity is to be put: lining up behind a party and candidate that are as irrevocably instruments of aggression and exploitation as the other major party and candidate -- in other words, Left unity in support of Right politics? That's like saying Christians must put their differences aside to line up behind a policy of atheism.

It should be clear to anyone who wants to spend a few moments reflecting on the undignified, and I should quickly add, ongoing surrender of the soft Left to capitalism at home and abroad, that US Marxists and Democratic Socialists and Communists and progressives and anyone willing to suffer through the sermons of Michael Albert (the Pope of the Church of Noam Chomskyism, as one wag dubbed him) decided long ago that whoever the Democrats picked as their presidential candidate -- even if it was the ghost of Benito Mussolini -- would get their support come November.

And ever since they've been rationalizing a decision whose roots are sunk deep in emotion and has nothing whatever to do with reason.

It dawned on me one day that no matter how much like Bush Kerry is, there will always be some difference between the two, which, no matter how infinitesimal and insignificant, will be used to justify a vote for Kerry.

If their foreign policies are alike, Kerry supporters will seize on some difference in social policy. If their social policies are the same, Supreme Court appointments will be cited as an important distinguishing feature. If Kerry says he'd make the same Supreme Court appointments as Bush, something else will be found.

Which isn't to say there are no differences between the two; only that some difference will be used to justify the decision Kerry-supporters made long ago to back the Democrats come hell or high water.

All they're doing now is trying to convince themselves they're not fucking stupid, full of shit, and fucking nuts for doing so. Hence, the lame rationalizations, including Noam Chomsky's small policy differences can equal big real-world differences paralogism (the small difference between Bush and Kerry can translate into important implications), **so approvingly cited by those who'll vote for a candidate who would have invaded Iraq to punish the incumbent who did.**

An example of how small policy differences can equal big real-world differences is presumably given in this: Bush would continue the occupation of Iraq by a coalition of the willing under US leadership, and Kerry would continue the occupation of Iraq under US leadership with NATO along for the ride, if he can convince the alliance to go along.

It also dawned on me that soft Left backers of Kerry are using a cascading system of justification that resembles the very same one used by Bush and Tony Blair to justify the takeover of Iraq.

Here's how it works: You make a policy choice (invade Iraq or vote for the Democrats) and then come up with a reason for doing so that has the advantage of plausibility (Saddam won't give up his banned weapons or Kerry wouldn't have sent troops to Mesopotamia).

When critics shoot it down, or circumstances prove you wrong, you invent a new one.

When that reason is shown to be full of holes, you come up with another, and so on.

Eventually, you'll run out of reasons, whereupon you can simply declare with great conviction, "Knowing what I know today, I'd still do what I did."

The events of the recent past say most people will regard this as perfectly acceptable, indeed admirable.

Accordingly, if soft Left Kerry-supporters could be convinced that Kerry and Bush are equally instruments of the same socioeconomic system to the same degree (which they are) they would still say, "Well, all the same, I'm voting for Kerry because I think he's the lesser evil," which could mean that all in all they're pretty comfortable with the way things are, but for a few tweaks they'd make here and there.

It's clear soft Left support for Kerry is solid and impervious to reason. Trying to soften it is like trying to persuade your teen-age daughter not to go out with the three-timing, porno magazine photographer she's enrapt with. The heart trumps the mind.

The difference however is that your teen-age daughter will eventually learn. Soft Left supporters of the Democrats never do.

This should be kept in mind by people who say: "There's no point arguing with them. They've made up their minds, and all you'll accomplish by belaboring the point is to alienate them. They'll learn."

All of this is true enough, except the last point. They won't learn, and the evidence is they've never learned.

An intelligent 12 year-old not weighed down by infatuation with the myth that the Democrats are the lesser evil, or more preposterously, a potentially progressive party, could figure out that the Democrats have always, as much as the Republicans, been as irrevocably committed to exploitation and aggression at home and abroad, and, on occasion, more so.

For example, Kerry is opposed to Bush's plan to draw down troops in south Korea, because...well, the time is drawing near, he says, when we might have to give the north Koreans a good shit kicking, for (gasp!) arming themselves to deter Uncle Sam from giving them a good shit kicking.

And it doesn't take a genius to see that the Democratic presidential candidate of 2004 is as inextricably a part of corporate America and its interests, and as unabashedly committed to its aggrandizement at the expense of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, north Korea, Cuba, emerging great power rivals, and the people of the United States, as George W. Bush and his cabinet are.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

CIA Helping Cover Up Bush Regime Lies About Iraq WMDs

[Los Angeles Times, August 20, 2004, Pg. 1]

The CIA is preparing a final report on its search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which will speculate on what Saddam Hussein's regime **might** have accomplished **several years into the future** if left unchecked. ***This direction of the inquiry is seen by some officials as an effort to obscure the fact that no banned weapons were found.***

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